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ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE
AND VIRGINIA ADVERTISER.
(FOR THE COUNTRY)

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An Expose

A year or two ago, there came before the public a forlorn Southern widow, who touchingly described the loss of her darling husband, and the sad orphanage of her children, and who was, in her own person, a fine example of chastity and maternal tenderness. Her only fault, if faults they may be called, were an ineradicable propensity for lying, and a passion for selling forged autographs. It has since been surmised that this delicately nurtured and most untruthful Virginia lady, whose little paradise of a home had been destroyed by "the ruthless invader," was not a she, but a he; or, at all events, that she had a most unladylike expansion of waistband and wore the well-supposed we say, pantaloons. These little blemishes, in an otherwise estimable character, were nevertheless regarded by a censorious world as so damaging that, after awhile, the forlorn widow ceased to tell her sorrowful story, or to offer for sale to sympathizing souls her priceless relics.

No sooner, however, had she disappeared from the scene than another female personage took her place—another, and yet, strange to say, evidently the same. The Neo-Patrist, whose philosophy was tinged with the Hindu doctrine of metempsychosis, had a theory that, in the transmigration of a soul from one body to another, it took a lower or a higher form of humanity according as the conduct of the individual in the previous state of existence had improved in goodness or increased in evil. Now, it is a remarkable fact, which may be cited in confirmation of this theory of the Neo-Patrist, that the next form assumed by the late Southern widow was of a rather lower grade, inasmuch as it was that of a young lady who, although she had been betrothed to an English nobleman, had lost social caste, having unhappily "scored her wings on the Continent." By another singular coincidence, which is only susceptible of satisfactory explanation on the theory of metempsychosis, this "scored" but beautiful young aristocrat found herself, as the forlorn widow did before her, also a resident of Montreal. She was, likewise, similarly addicted to writing a multitude of letters, all of them literal copies of each other, but signed sometimes Minnie Pury, and sometimes Clara Ashton. All of these letters, conveying exactly the same story of shame and destitution, were written for the particular information of my one "dear cousin, Fred." By some strange hallucination, the tender confessions of frailty were misdirected to persons in the United States, and invariably closed with a beautiful, but vague aspiration for the love of some congenial soul. The yearning but absent-minded correspondent speedily found not one but many "congenial souls" at the North—the sympathies of a certain sort of men being so wrought upon that they not only sent Miss Minnie money, but gallantly invited her to become the beloved object of some number of delightfully deluded bachelors. Our readers can hardly have forgotten the sequel to this romantic correspondence; or how, when pounced upon by the Montreal police, pretty little Minnie Pury shed suddenly her fabled crotchet, and expanded into a stout old gentleman dressed in a suit of country cloth, wearing a heavy beard and moustache, and sporting a briar wood pipe.

We should not have ventured to reproduce these curious contributions to the annals of modern psychology, but that the forlorn widow, alias Minnie Pury, alias Clara Ashton, has recently undergone other transformations, and as Eva Ellis, and Kate Farran, and Fannie Caldwell, has again, we regret to say, "strayed from the paths of virtue" and has sedulously solicited contributions from sympathetic individuals on the strength of it. It would seem now-a-days to be so meritorious a thing to let a woman to "stoop to folly" that when the other day, about fifty letters were found in her possession, in many of which sums of money, varying from one dollar to a hundred dollars, had been enclosed. The generous contributor of the larger amount seems to have had some previous correspondence with Miss Farran, and to have been under the impression that he had fairly purchased the right to address her ladyship as "My Darling Kate." Some other individuals, and we are shocked to add—"with families," also "expressed a strong desire to meet her," and sent her money to defray her expenses to certain hotels in certain cities. Others gave her lots of good advice and no money. One old gentleman read her letter and answered it in a very impudent manner; stating, among other things, that he ceased years ago to give money to young ladies who travelled on their muscle.

But neither "Kate," nor "Eva," nor "Fannie"—for it is sometimes one who writes, and sometimes another—care a hair pin for the shockingly saucy rebuke of a "musty, rusty, crusty, fusty" old gentleman. On the first of April last, Eva, taking heart of grace, wrote a member of Congress from Maryland, and delicately asked him if he was "the gentleman Mr. Davis, of Maryland, introduced to me at Washington in the winter of 1863-4, and whom I gladly met in society afterwards?" The question was finely tentative; but the bait in this instance was not taken. Eva's correspondent was not the gentleman alluded to, and Eva's letter was quietly returned to her with "some good advice." Far otherwise was it with a gushing enthusiast living near Westchester, Pennsylvania. He entered into quite an extensive correspondence with "Dear Fannie"—Eva's "counterfeit resemblance." He even got so far as to address her as "My darling angel," sent her, on several occasions, sums of money varying from ten to thirty dollars, and, finally, in a paroxysm of passionate regret that he should waste his "sweetness" in the desert air of "Boston," implored her to take the next train to Westchester, put up at "the American Hotel," and register, if necessary, under the name of "my cousin, Mrs. Caldwell." The eager wooer closed his previous epistle by promising to call in the morn-

ing and recognize the relationship. But Fannie's ardent admirer was destined to realize the truth of the old proverb about the cup and the lip. The police at Boston, like those at Montreal, brought, a few days ago, this charming Love Drama to a summary ending. They suddenly confronted Eva, and Kate, and Fannie, as they were coquetting with the Postoffice Clerk, when lo! the three youthful sinners, on being questioned, gave their names William K. Emerson, and by the old trick of metempsychosis, were forthwith transformed, as at Montreal, into "an oldish gentleman in spectacles, with a bullet-shaped head, a short thick neck, and a chunky body."—*Balt. Gazette.*

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feb 15—11

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feb 12

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